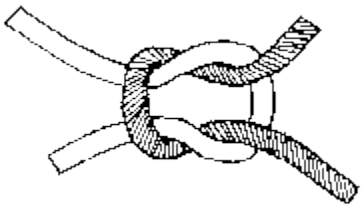
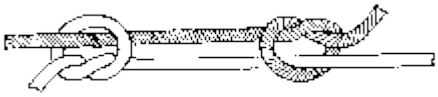
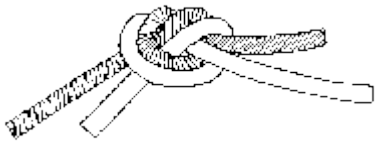
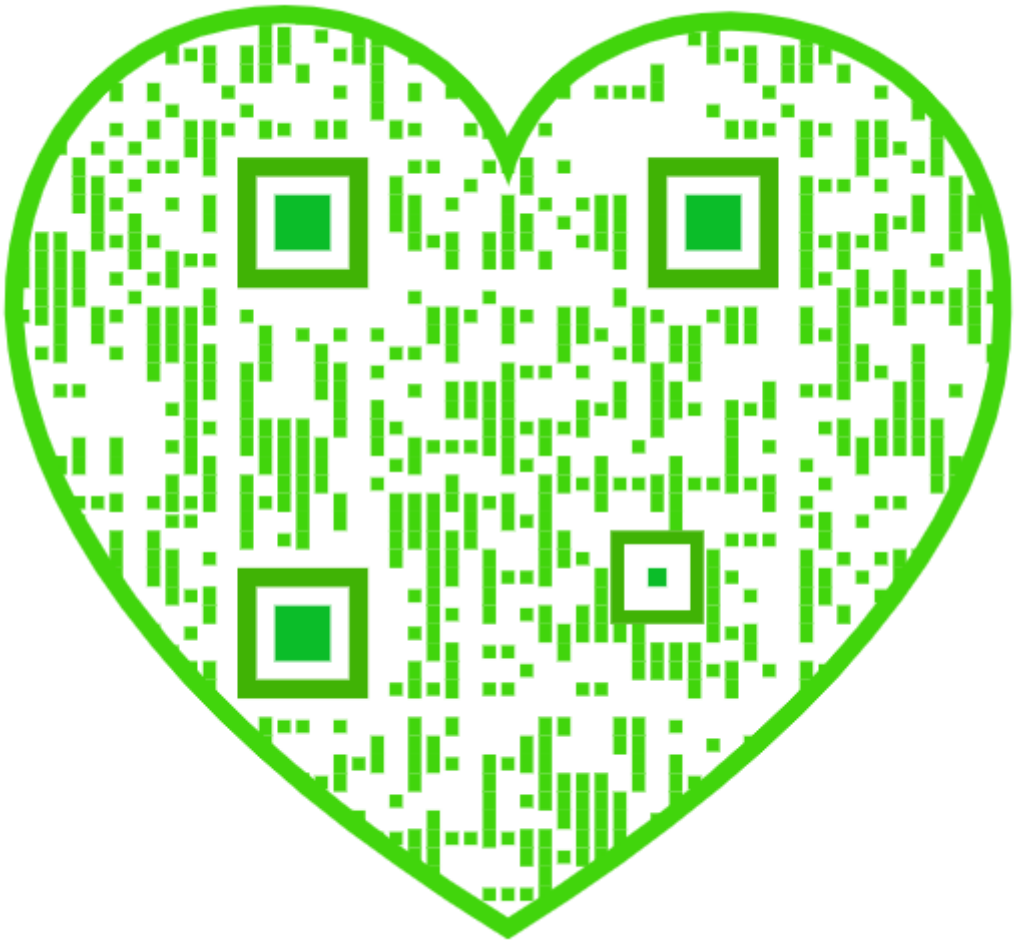
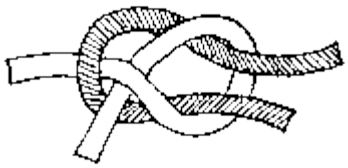
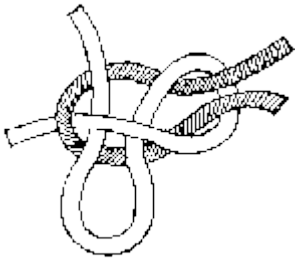
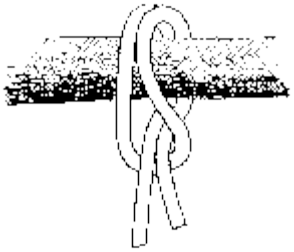
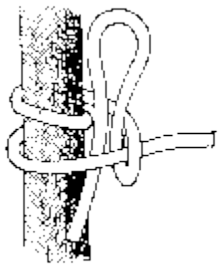
KNOTS

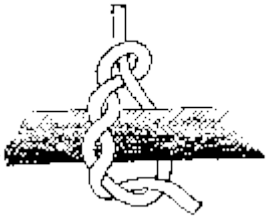
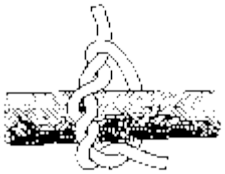
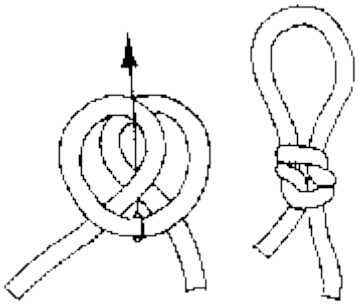
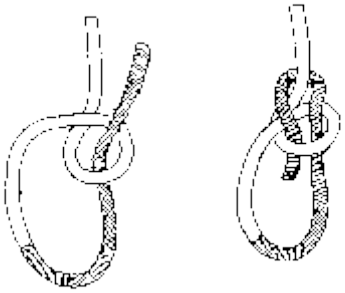
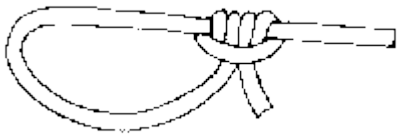
The following table shows how some common knots and lashes are tied. However, to practice good bondage you do not need to know all of these knots. All you really need to know is a basic knot like the square knot. If learning the less common knots is of interest to you (as it was to me), then by all means study all you like, but don't feel overwhelmed. Your bondage is exactly that - your bondage, and the whole idea is to have fun, right?

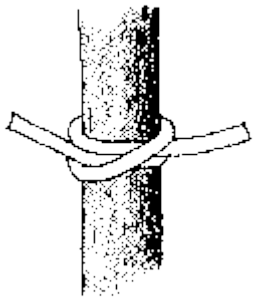
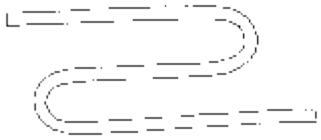
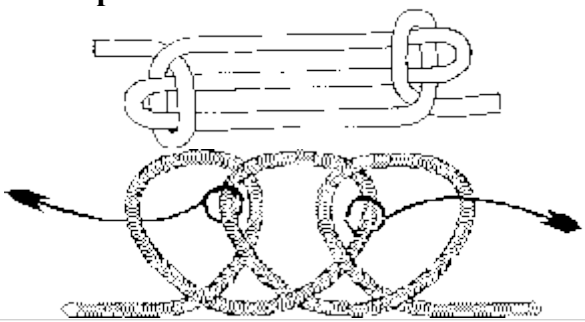
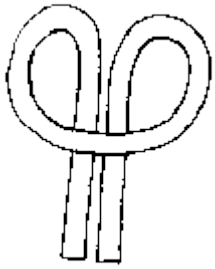
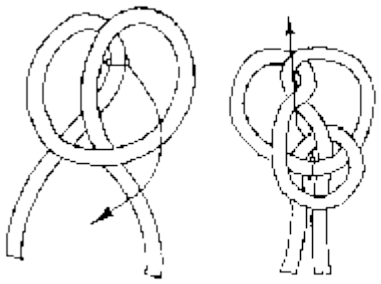
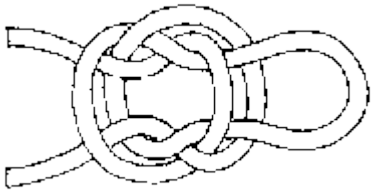
The easiest way to learn to tie these knots is to practice tying them using a short length of rope and perhaps a bedpost or other inanimate object until you can tie them well without trouble. Then you can move on to a human subject.

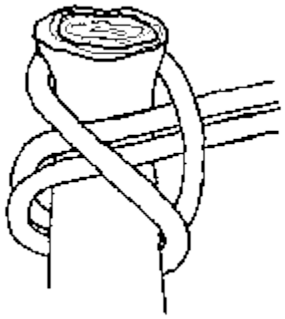
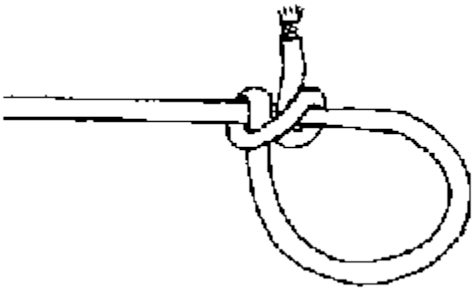
Square or Reef Knot 	This is a knot for tying two rope ends together. Learn the knot by twisting one end over the other one. Then twist them again, with the same end on top once again. Tighten, and the knot is done. Make sure both twists have the same rope end on top. Not to be be used when your safety depends on it, but appropriate when you need a knot that's really quick and easy.
Fisherman's Knot 	Ideal for heavy, stiff, or otherwise difficult to work with ropes, this knot is easy to tie, but once it has been tightened down, it can be very difficult to remove, especially difficult to remove if it has a load on it (for example, if used in suspension). Slippery rope, such as nylon, will require a double tie on each end to make it fast.
Water Knot 	Another knot used to tie two ropes together, this is very strong but difficult to untie. It is good for tying wet rope and rubber. Not needed for most SM applications, but when working with latex straps or other difficult-to-tie materials, it can really be helpful.



Sheetbend 	Used to tie two ropes together: notice the similarity to the Square (or Reef Knot.) Equally good for thick and thin ropes, and easy to untie.
Slipped Sheetbend 	A variation of the ordinary sheetbend, but even easier to untie -- just pull the loose end.
Lark's Head 	This very easy knot can be tied even if the ends are already tied down. Both ends of the rope must have the same load, or the knot could slip and become unreliable. Use to tie into grommets or eyebolts for a neat, clean look. Also used to tie into D-rings, such as those found on a collar or on wrist restraints. A body harness or "Web" can be started by attaching to the subject's collar with a Lark's Head. For this type of application, the knot must be made with the centre of the rope, leaving two equal lengths to work symmetrically around the body.
Round Turn 	A quick way to tie down a rope end. Not secure enough to be used where safety is an issue, but excellent for temporarily securing the rope end. If you don't pull the rope end through, but only the loop, you are left with a Slipped Round Turn (pictured), which is a great temporary fastening, as it can be released with one pull of the rope end.

Timber Hitch  **RIGHT**  **WRONG**	It is very important to double the working end of the rope back and twist it upon itself, not around the anchor. Look closely at the pictures to see the difference.
Fisherman's Loop 	One of the easiest ways to make a loop which will not grow or shrink under a load. Useful to tie onto a wrist or other body part, because it will not tighten and cut off circulation.
Bowline 	An extremely sturdy, and therefore safe, fixed loop. Used by emergency personnel to loop around a victim's body, under their armpits, for rescue operations. If properly tied, will not grow or shrink under a load. This little story may help you learn the knot: The rabbit comes up out of its hole, circles the tree, and goes back into the hole.
Prussick 	For creating a loop whose size can be changed by sliding the knot up and down the line. Sliding loops such as this one can be used to tighten down a line. Tie the loop around your anchor point, then slide the knot down the line, making the loop larger. The line will be pulled tight, and will remain there.

Clove Hitch 	A popular knot among hobbiests, this is commonly used in many disciplines, but not too often in SM. This is because it does not tend to hold up under varying stress, only if the load is equal on both lines. However, if the ends are brought back from the anchor in the same direction, the resulting hitch is safe and elegant, provided that the load on both lines is equal.
Sheepshank  	Use this to shorten the middle of a rope, for instance to take up slack in a rope already tied at both ends. It must be kept under a load, or it will come untied. The lower picture shows a "trick" way to tie the Sheepshank.
Jug Sling Hitch   	This knot got its name because it was used to create handles on the mouth of a water or wine jug. The rope was tied around the neck of a ceramic jug, with the Jug Sling Hitch tied at equidistant points on the perimeter. It is a useful way of forming a loop suitable for attaching tethers to the bottom, and will not resize, regardless of the load.

 **Pile Hitch**	This knot can be used to tie down the end of your line. Not recommended for attachment to the body, as it will tighten and block circulation, but very useful when tying someone spread-eagle.
Buntline Hitch 	A quick and easy way to secure the end of your line. This hitch consists of a Clove Hitch tied around the anchor end of the line. The loop can resize under a load, so it can't be relied upon to attach to the body. However, like the Prussick, it can be used to tighten down a line.